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Duterte's Resurgent Nationalism in the Philippines: A Discursive Institutionalist Analysis

Julio C. Teehankee

Abstract: Early in his administration, Rodrigo Duterte, the controversial sixteenth president of the Philippines, did what no other Filipino president has done before – announce a separation from the geopolitical interests of its former colonial master, the United States of America. Beyond the personal slights caused by the US criticism of his anti-drug campaign lies a deeper sense of historical grievance that has been ingrained in Duterte's generation and his identity as a Mindanaoan. Not only does he represent Mindanao's resentment towards "imperial Manila," but also a historical blowback against "US imperialism." Duterte's nationalist exhortations can be traced to the cycle of regime narratives in the Philippines, which serves as a medium for institutional continuity and change through the mobilisation of ideas at a discursive level. By reviving the anti-US nationalism of his youth, Duterte is repudiating the liberal reformist, albeit elitist, narrative of the Aquino-to-Aquino regimes. Duterte's so-called "pivot to China" is also a dramatic reversal of his predecessors' strong anti-China and rabidly pro-American foreign policy position. This paper blends Vivien A. Schmidt's discursive institutional analytical framework with Stephen Skowronek's concept of presidential leadership in political time to analyse how crafted narratives are transformed into governance scripts that bind together a coalition of interests within a particular institutional setting.

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Keywords: Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, Philippine presidency, Philippine politics, nationalism, regime narrative, discursive institutionalism

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Introduction

On 20 October 2016, Philippine President Rodrigo R. Duterte boldly declared at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, "Your honours, in this venue, I announce my separation from the United States." For most observers, the statement was the latest in the growing list of unfiltered exhortations from the controversial former mayor of Davao City in the southern island of Mindanao. The statement also served as a crescendo in the series of verbal insults and expletives he has directed towards the United States of America, the European Union and the United Nations. Duterte has deeply resented the criticisms raised by the West against his ongoing "War on Drugs" which has allegedly claimed the lives of more than 3,000 people suspected of being involved in the illegal drug trade.[1]

"Unfortunately, this started with the war against drugs," Duterte explained to the press. He added:

> What prompted me to change foreign policy is that almost getting a raw deal with the West and the EU signed a manifesto and they told me it was prepared by the lawyers and I share that the lawyers warned me that I can be prosecuted. (Javier 2016)

Beyond the personal slights caused by the West's criticism of his anti-drug campaign lies a deeper sense of historical grievance that have been ingrained in Duterte's generation and his identity as a Mindanaoan. Not only does he represent Mindanao's resentment towards "imperial Manila," but also a historical blowback against "US imperialism" (Moss 2016; Kinzer 2016). The rise of Duterte cannot be separated from the recent trend in the Asian region – the mobilisation of nationalism by strong leaders to bolster regime legitimacy. Nationalist sentiments and resentment have re-emerged in recent years and have impacted both domestic and foreign policy.

In effect, Duterte is mobilising nationalist rhetoric as a discursive repudiation of the reformist narrative of the post-Marcos liberal democratic regime. This is couched along the constitutional provision of an "independent foreign policy" that former National Security Adviser General Jose T. Almonte (2016) defined as "not for or against anybody

1 The number of deaths has been separated into those involving legitimate police operations and actual cases of state-sanctioned extra-judicial killings. Most of the dead victims were left with blood splattered cardboards bearing the words "drug pusher", "drug user", or "drug lord". Aside from the killings carried out by suspected vigilantes, it is also believed that the killings were part of an internal purge executed by the drug lords and their corrupt accomplishes in the police force (see Elemia 2016).

but equidistant to everyone." Duterte's so-called "pivot to China" is a dramatic reversal of his predecessors' strong anti-China and rabidly pro-American foreign policy position.[2] More than ideological revivalism, Duterte's resurgent nationalism is also driven by pragmatism, as reflected by his "position on the South China Sea, calling for a dialogue-based, bilateral settlement of maritime disputes" (Heydarian 2016).

This paper situates Duterte's nationalist exhortations within the cycle of regime narratives of the Philippine presidency and the resurgence of nationalism in Asia. It adopts a discursive institutional approach in demonstrating the power of regime narratives in binding together a coalition of interests within a particular institutional setting. Duterte's resurgent nationalism will be traced to the four enduring regime narratives of the Philippine presidency, namely: the narrative of the "unfinished revolution", the narrative of the "great nation", the narrative of "good governance", and the narrative of the "*masa*". I will then discuss the intellectual roots of Filipino nationalism and its early influence on Duterte's political worldview.

Rise of Duterte

The election of Rodrigo Duterte came on the heels of six years of high growth and political stability under the administration of President Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III. However, Duterte's phenomenal victory should be understood within the context of what the second Aquino administration has failed to do. Despite his personal popularity, which was due to his clean image and lack of personal political scandals, Aquino failed to institutionalise his straight path reformism known as "*Daang Matuwid*" (Teehankee and Thompson 2016b).

Given his initial popularity and huge social capital and majority that the Liberal Party coalition held in both chambers, he could have done much more. He could have realised the institutionalisation of his administration's mantra of "*kung walang corrupt walang mahirap*" by pushing for socio-political reforms that would have cemented the legacy of his good

2 The Aquino administration was notable for rallying the Philippines against China's controversial historical claims over disputed islands located in the South China Sea (or West Philippines Sea as the Philippine Government would call it), which are believed to have abundant deposits of oil and gas. Aquino repeatedly rejected China's preference for a bilateral dialogue. Instead, his administration opted to file an arbitration case on 23 January 2013 against China at the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in Hague to settle the maritime dispute.

governance narrative. Had he succeeded in passing the Freedom of Information Bill, the Political Party Development Act and the Anti-Political Dynasty Act, Aquino would have radically transformed the power structure of the country (Teehankee 2014).

As the first mayor from a major city outside Manila to win the presidency, Duterte's calls for a federal system drew on 'anti-Imperial Manila' sentiments, particularly in his birthplace of southern Mindanao. Besides this strong regional base (which extended into parts of the Visayas islands), Duterte strongly appealed to voters within Manila itself, where his calls for a brutal and immediate implementation of "law and order" have resonated particularly well. The exit poll conducted by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) on Election Day showed that most rich and educated people voted for Duterte; he received 45.9 per cent of the votes from class ABC and 49.2 per cent from those voters who had received some graduate level education (*Interaksyon.com* 2016). Based on the income segmentation of the population used by marketers and survey firms, class ABC refer to the rich and the middle class.

Duterte's victory in the polls is related to frustration and anger with the limits of the reformist agenda of the Aquino administration, but more generally with the good governance reformist regimes stretching back to Fidel Ramos and Corazon Aquino. However, this dissatisfaction is different than the kind Joseph Estrada tapped into in 1998 (after the "successful" Ramos presidency). It is related less to the dispossessed and the losers of "exclusive" growth, and more about the anxieties about criminality, rampant smuggling, incompetence, and government corruption of those now marginally better off after a couple of decades of solid growth. It is about the frustrations of the gainers, as well as the anger of the losers in Aquino's so-called growth economy (Teehankee and Thompson 2016a). The SWS tracked five continuous quarters of positive net gainers in terms of personal change of quality of life between March 2015 and April 2016. But this was preceded by a long stretch of 18 quarters of negative net gainers from September 2010 to December 2014 (Teehankee 2016a).

The Duterte phenomenon is not a revolt of the poor; it is elite-driven. It is the angry protest of the wealthy, newly rich, well off, and the modestly successful new middle class (including call centre workers, Uber drivers, and overseas Filipino workers abroad) (Teehankee and Thompson 2016b). However, instead of feeling better off, despite robust economic growth during the past six years of the Aquino presidency, the middle class have suffered from a lack of public services, endured horrendous land and air traffic, feared the breakdown of peace and order,

and silently witnessed their tax money being siphoned by corruption despite promises of improved governance. They were supposed to be the beneficiaries of *Daang Matuwid*. The poor have their conditional cash transfers (CCTs) and the rich have their private–public partnerships (PPPs). The middle class have been short-changed (Teehankee 2016a).

From the beginning, Duterte has brought the vulgarity commonly found in local political campaigns to the national stage. The curses, coarse language and outrageous statements shocked those accustomed to more genteel national politics but roused his core supporters, especially on social media. Upon his victory, Duterte has demonstrated his aversion with formalities, traditions and the trappings of power by skipping his official proclamation by Congress. While most victorious presidential candidates would reach out to the various sectors of society to unite the country, Duterte has demonstrated contempt for established institutions by throwing insults and inflammatory statements against the Roman Catholic Church, the media, and even the United Nations (Teehankee and Thompson 2016c).

So far, Duterte has given a preview of the type of presidential leadership he will exercise in power. This is something that the country has never experienced before – a maverick presidency; one that is insensitive to public opinion; a leader who is unfiltered, unorthodox and speaks his mind. His policy decisions will be driven primarily by his own personal, idiosyncratic policy views and principles that are often heavily influenced by simple stories. In Duterte's mind-set; he was elected on the platform of real (even drastic) change. He believes there is no room for niceties if you want realise real change.

Duterte's election on 9 May 2016 signified a major rupture in the liberal democratic regime re-established 30 years earlier with the ouster of the dictatorship of Ferdinand E. Marcos. In the Philippines, a presidency can be a prequel or a sequel to an ongoing regime narrative. A president ascends to power either affiliated or opposed to an existing regime. An incumbent president's regime orientation largely determines the nature of a presidential administration. The recurrence of these regime orientations provides a structured context for presidential leadership in the pattern of political time.

Historically, the Philippine presidency can be divided into four distinct regimes: proto-regimes, the neocolonial regime, the authoritarian regime, and the reformist regime (see Table 1). It has spanned five republics that have produced three short-lived (revolutionary, late-colonial and occupation) regimes and three long-term (neocolonial, authoritarian and reformist) regimes (Teehankee 2016b). The following section will

situate the rise of Duterte within the cycle of regime narratives in the Philippines.

Table 1. Philippine Presidential Regimes

Regime	Republic	President	Date
Nationalist regimes	First Philippine Republic	Emilio Aguinaldo	23 January 1899–1 April 1901
	Philippine Commonwealth	Manuel L. Quezon	15 November 1935–1 August 1944
		Sergio Osmeña	1 August 1944–28 May 1946
	Second Philippine Republic	Jose P. Laurel	14 October 1943–19 August 1945
Neocolonial regime	Third Philippine Republic	Manuel Roxas	28 May 1946–15 April 1948
		Elpido Quirino	17 April 1948–30 December 1953
		Ramon Magsaysay	30 December 1953–17 March 1957
		Carlos P. Garcia	18 March 1957–30 December 1961
		Diosdado Macapagal	30 December 1961–30 December 1965
		Ferdinand Marcos	30 December 1965–21 September 1972
Authoritarian regime	Fourth Philippine Republic	Ferdinand Marcos	21 September 1972–25 February 1986
Reformist regime	Fifth Philippine Republic	Corazon C. Aquino	25 February 1986–30 June 1992
		Fidel V. Ramos	30 June 1992–30 June 1998
		Joseph Estrada	30 June 1998–21 January 2001
		Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo	21 January 2001–30 June 2010
		Benigno Aquino III	30 June 2010–30 June 2016
		Rodrigo Duterte	30 June 2016

Source: Teehankee 2016b.

Presidential Narratives and Discursive Institutionalism

Narratives are commonly used in discourse and literary analyses and have become a popular interpretive approach in the social sciences. Narratives are akin to stories and can be defined as "discourses with a clear sequential order that connect events in a meaningful way for a definite audience and thus offer insights about the world and/or people's experiences of it" (Hinchman and Hinchman, as quoted in Elliot 2005: 3). Under this definition, narratives are temporal or based on a chronological sequence of events; meaningful since they evoke empathy; and social as they are communicated to a specific audience (Elliot 2005: 4).

Like stories, narratives help individuals comprehend a complex world. They serve as tools that help bring order into chaos, infuse facts with meanings and evoke memories of learning and experiences. Narratives function properly as a fundamental framing device in understanding the world. They also provide ready-made points of references from rich sources such as literature, myth, and history. By framing one's campaign narrative within these points, a president can project a larger-than-life stature in the public's eye (Cornog 2004).

Presidential success depends largely on the president's ability to form a consensus around a narrative and generate public support for the story line. By capturing the public imagination, the presidential narrative crystallises the support needed to build a governing coalition. Crafted narratives are the principal medium of exchange that connects a politician with the issues of the day and with the hearts and minds of the voters. An emotive story line connects people with people, humanises the politician, and generates public sympathy similar to a lead character in the movies or soap opera. Thus, "looking at presidential politics as a contest of narratives has a tremendous explanatory power" (Cornog 2004: 4).

Presidential narratives may be lengthy and complex or quick and crude. They may originate from a presidential candidate or from a political opponent. They may even emanate from a journalistic account like a newspaper article. Consequently, there

> are all kinds of presidential life stories, because there are all kinds of stories. The word "story" can refer to the course of a person's entire life of a single moment in that life, to factual narratives and fictitious ones, and can even suggest a lie (or a "tall story"). (Cornog 2004: 2)

Presidential narratives can be considered as a medium for institutional continuity and change through the mobilisation of ideas at a discursive level. In this light, narratives together with frames, myths, collective memories, stories, scripts, and more form the substantive dimension of ideas and discourse of "what is and what ought to be" at different levels of generality. From an interactive dimension, discursive processes are constructed in a 'coordinative' policy sphere and deliberated in a 'communicative' political sphere (Schmidt 2008, 2010). This discursive approach to the study of political institution by emphasising the explanatory power of ideas in political analysis is known as "discursive institutionalism" (DI).

DI refers to

> an umbrella concept for the vast range of works in political science that take account of the substantive content of ideas and the interactive processes by which ideas are conveyed and exchanged through discourse. (Schmidt 2010: 3)

Dubbed as the "fourth intuitionalism" in political science after rational institutionalism (RI), historical institutionalism (HI), and sociological institutionalism (SI),[3] DI emphasises the explanatory role of ideas and discourse in understanding institutional continuity and change. Discourse here is taken to encompass not only the substantive content of ideas but also the interactive processes in which these ideas are communicated. Discourse in DI is not just about the "text" or ideas (what is said) but also its context (where, when, how, and why it was said). Corollary, institutionalism in DI implies that this approach is not only about the communication of "text" or ideas but the institutional context in which and through which ideas are communicated by discourse. Moreover, DI focuses not only on structure (what is said, or where and how) but also on agency (who said what to whom). Both are

> simultaneously constraining structures and enabling constructs of meaning, which are internal to 'sentient' (thinking and speaking) agents whose 'background ideational abilities' explain how they create and maintain institutions at the same time that their 'fore-

3 The emergence of "new institutionalism" in political science eschewed the formal-legal and a theoretical approach of the "old institutionalism" and shifted its focus on a more expansive definition of institutions to include informal conventions as formal rules that operated in more explicit and diverse theoretical frameworks. The first three distinct analytical approaches include the focus on historical context, rational calculations, and sociological culture and norms. See Lowndes and Robert 2013.

> ground discursive abilities' enable them to communicate critically about those institutions, to change (or maintain) them. (Schmidt 2010: 4)

While rules are conveyed through documents and legislation, and practices are modelled by actors, narratives are transmitted via the spoken word, literally by telling stories or relayed in symbolic form or scripts. From an institutional perspective, narratives can shape behaviour, constraining some actors and empowering others. Ultimately, "the most effective political institutions are characterised by resonant stories" (Lowndes and Robert 2013: 63). The following section will blend Vivien A. Schmidt's discursive institutional analytical framework (2008, 2010) with Stephen Skowronek's concept of presidential leadership in political time (1997, 2011). I will also analyse how crafted narratives are transformed into governance scripts that bind together a coalition of interests within a particular institutional setting.

Cycle of Presidential Narratives

The history of the Philippine presidency has been marked by a cycle of regime narratives. Given the underdeveloped ideological articulation in Philippine politics, presidential regimes consist of quasi-programmatic, emotive narratives in election campaigns and/or a governance script that binds together a coalition of interests within a particular institutional context. Hence, presidential regime narratives can be

> biographical or those 'told' by a group; openly expressed or 'hidden'; personal or overtly political; contemporary or 'historicised'; with the 'story telling' involved analysed from a psychological, policy, ideological, or subaltern perspective, among others. The major claim is that politicians offer competing 'nationalist' or 'anti-American,' 'populist' or 'rich-versus-poor,' and 'reformist' or 'anti-corruption' narratives in the struggle for voter support. (Thompson 2010a: 5)

The Philippine presidency, acting both as an agent and as a structure of governance, has shaped and been shaped by the cycles of political development and decay through political time. This cycle has been expressed through "regime narratives" or the governing "script" that binds together a coalition of interests within a particular institutional context (Teehankee 2016b; Thompson 2014). The ability to constantly form coalitions in a system where stable coalitions are elusive is the primary governance requisite of an incumbent president. Thus,

> the dynamic interplay between regimes and presidents […] requires presidents to attend regularly to the problems of building and maintaining coalitions across parties and even across the regime-opposition boundary. (Lieberman 2000: 277)

To accomplish this, most presidents embrace established story lines or narratives that provide the "governing scripts" for their administration.

There are four dominant regime narratives in the history of the Philippine presidency: the narrative of the "unfinished revolution" (nationalist), the narrative of the "great nation" (developmentalist), the narrative of "good governance" (reformist), and the narrative of the "masa" (populist). These narratives are attempts to address the four continuing challenges of the Filipino nation-state, namely identity, modernity, accountability, and equity (see Table 2).[4] The "unfinished revolution" and the "aborted nation" have become recurring narratives that have reverberated across succeeding regimes in the Philippines. As Abinales and Amoroso asserted,

> The birth of the Filipino nation was not only 'aborted' by U.S. colonialism, as many Filipinos feel today, it was already riven with class conflict. Tension between elites and masses would become a defining feature of Philippine political development, lending an 'unfinished' quality to the political discourse of the revolution to the present day. (Abinales and Amoroso 2005: 129)

The narrative of the "Great Nation" was a logical continuity to the narrative of the "Unfinished Revolution." Taken from a modernisation perspective, development and modernity ought to be the natural outcome of nation-building.[5] According to AR Magno, the so-called "national development" regimes that emerged in the 1970s to the 1980s simplified the issue of underdevelopment to mere problems of "efficiency" and "manageability" that could be resolved by adequate "planning" and strong political will as evoked by Ferdinand Marcos (Magno 1990: 8).

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4 There is a fourth narrative that cuts across the four other narratives: *the narrative of the "demos"* or the democratic narrative. Given the legitimising power of the democratic narrative, both democrats and autocrats have conveniently appropriated the democratic narrative at critical historical junctures. Marcos, for example, justified his declaration of martial law by claiming to save the democratic system from the oligarchical Right and communist Left.

5 On the other hand, post-colonial and postmodernist scholars find the perspective of modernisation theory, in general, and the very concept of modernity, in particular, very problematic and teleological.

Good governance and reforms became the counter-narrative to Marcos' developmental authoritarianism. By battling the "evils" of corruption, political reformists often make claims of the "good" in their crusade for "good governance." This story line is attractive to the members of the middle class who often deplore government inefficiencies and as well as the material and financial resources lost to institutionalised corruption. By making personal sacrifices and enduring their lot at the hands of "corrupt" officials, reformists become worthy of the public's trust. Hence, the reformist narrative flows from the political promise "I will help you […] because I am (morally) good" (Thompson 2010). "Honesty" and "sincerity" are often used as code words for the reformist narrative. Lastly, populism (from the Latin word *populis*) refers to "a movement, a regime, a leader, or even a state which claims close affinity with the people" (De Castro 2007: 930). As an ideology, it is misused or abused, and sometimes reviled since "it gives expression to the crudest hopes and fears of the masses and by leaving no scope for deliberation and rational analysis" (Heywood 2000: 178). Populists usually make class appeals and claim to champion the poor. Latin American-style populism fully emerged in the Philippines on the heels of the 1997 Asian financial crisis and shortly after, with the election of Joseph Estrada as the country's thirteenth president. The post-crisis regional environment saw the electoral victories of populist politicians not only in the Philippines but in Thailand as well.

Table 2. Competing Narratives in Political Time

	Unfinished Revolution	**Great Nation**	**Good Governance**	***Masa***
Nationalist (*identity*)	Aguinaldo Quezon Osmeña Laurel			*Duterte*
Developmentalist (*modernity*)	*Garcia* *Marcos*	Roxas Quirino Macapagal-Arroyo	*Ramos*	*Macapagal*
Reformist (*accountability*)			Aquino Aquino III	*Magsaysay*
Populist (*equity*)	*Estrada*			

Note: Italicised names are "mixed-narrative presidencies".

Source: Culled by the author.

Presidential administrations can either be one of two distinct types: (1) "single-narrative presidency", which adheres to one governing script or story line, or (2) "mixed-narrative presidency", which follows two or more governing scripts or story lines. Single-narrative presidencies include those of Aguinaldo, Quezon, Osmeña and Laurel, all of whom extolled the virtues of nationalism, lamented the "unfinished revolution" of 1898 and built a coalition of anti-colonial interests. The mother-and-son presidencies of Corazon C. Aquino and Benigno Aquino III highlighted the reformist narrative of good governance and crusaded against endemic corruption. Roxas, Quirino, and Macapagal-Arroyo pursued the goal of economic reconstruction and development as a source of political legitimacy.

Others saw the potency of mixed-narratives. Magsaysay, for example, coupled his reformist anti-corruption crusade with a populist "man-of-the-masses" image. Macapagal, who anchored his developmental vision in his "poor man" background, emulated Magsaysay's example. Estrada enhanced his populist "pro-*masa*" image with a nationalist narrative that drew not from Emilio Aguinaldo but from Andres Bonifacio – the so-called "Great Plebeian" who launched the revolution against Spain in 1896. Garcia's "Filipino First Policy" and Marcos' "New Society" were attempts to mobilise nationalist sentiments with developmental ambitions. The following section will expound on the narrative of the unfinished revolution.

The Unfinished Revolution

Emilio Aguinaldo, the general who led the revolution against the Spanish colonisers, headed the first Philippine republic as its president. Unfortunately, the nascent republic and Aguinaldo's fledgling regime were prematurely aborted as a result of cooptation and betrayal by the local elites in favour of the American colonisers.[6] After the capture of Aguinaldo and the fall of the first Philippine republic in 1901, the Americans immediate-

6 During a four-year period, Aguinaldo presided over four phases of the Philippine revolution against Spain: (1) as president of the revolutionary government of Tejeros, 22 March to 1 November 1897; (2) as president of the Biyak-na-Bato republic, 2 November 1897 to 15 December 1897; (3) as dictator of the revolutionary government, 24 May 1898 to 23 June 1898; and (4) as president of the First Philippine Republic of Malolos, 23 March 1901. See Ocampo 1999: 27.

ly started a process of colonial state-building.[7] The members of the Nacionalista Party (Nationalist Party, NP), under the leadership of Quezon and Osmeña, established themselves as heirs of the 1896 nationalist revolution and the 1899 Malolos Republic, while publicly advocating eventual "independence under the protectorate of the United States of America" (Cullinane 2003). Nonetheless, Quezon's brand of nationalism was conservative compared to that of the lower-class peasants, workers and veterans of the revolution, who advocated a more radical, if not a millenarian, vision of nationalism that hewed more closely to the spirit of the Philippine revolution (Abinales and Amoroso 2005). Ironically, the outbreak of the Second World War and the Japanese invasion created a political opportunity for the resurgence of this brand of nationalism.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Japan used propaganda to legitimise its invasion of the Philippines and other Asian countries, particularly the "Asia for the Asians" slogan directed against Western colonialism. As part of its "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" project, Japan established puppet governments in its occupied countries, including the Philippines. Thus, the Second Republic was formed in 1943 with Jose P. Laurel selected as president by the National Assembly. To eliminate American influence in the Philippines, the Japanese colonial regime invoked the "unfinished revolution" and encouraged the emergence of suppressed Filipino nationalist sentiments (Abinales and Amoroso 2005).

In other parts of Southeast Asia, the Japanese invasion signalled the twilight of Western colonialism and the strengthening of anti-colonial nationalist movements. In the Philippines, however, most of the Filipino elites who collaborated with the Japanese did so for pragmatic considerations or in deference to Quezon's directive to cooperate in order to ensure continuity of a civilian government through the newly installed Japanese regime. There was a segment of the elite, led by Laurel, who saw the opportunity to implement alternative nationalist programmes, such as teaching and writing in Filipino languages, restoring accounts of

7 This institutional project was implemented from the bottom up according to the following process: first, local autonomy preceded the development of central authority; second, party formation preceded national elections; and third, elections preceded bureaucratic institutionalisation. The American colonial administration relied heavily on local clans or *principalia* to consolidate power throughout the archipelago. Building on their base of local notables, *caciques*, and political clans, the Americans gradually introduced elections at the municipal (1901) and provincial (1902) levels, then for the national legislature (1907). This exercise of suffrage culminated in the presidential elections under the Philippine Commonwealth (1935). See Paredes 1989: 70–160.

the Philippine Revolution in local history books and situating the Philippines as part of Asia.[8] Outside the members of the elite who served in both the Commonwealth and the Second Republic, there were others who were ultra-nationalist, anti-American, and pro-Japanese. They included former revolutionaries like Emilio Aguinaldo and Artemio Ricarte, as well as mass leader and Quezon oppositionist Benigno Ramos.[9] After the war, those who served in the Japanese-sponsored republic (led by Laurel and other prominent members of the elite like Claro M. Recto) were prosecuted and later amnestied by the post-war administration. Both Laurel and Recto continued to be the articulators of the "unfinished revolution" brand of nationalism way into the post-war, neocolonial Third Philippine Republic (Abinales and Amoroso 2005).

For historian Reynaldo Ileto, the "unfinished revolution" has been an important political discourse deployed in post-war politics and nation-building. He wrote:

> […] at the outset that Filipino politicians of all colors have always felt a need to speak in the idiom of radical nationalism, which originates from the experience and memories of the revolution against Spain in 1896–98 and the Philippine-American war of 1899–1902. These events were inspired by both folk Christian traditions and the Enlightenment ideals of the French revolution. The discourse of "Unfinished Revolution" has proven to be extremely effective in mobilizing people and votes in modern Philippine politics. Any candidate or party hoping to succeed in electoral politics has had to ride on this sentiment since the first elections in 1906. (Ileto 2004: 2)

Consequently, the narrative of the "unfinished revolution" has been appropriated by the conservative and radical political forces in the Philippines, albeit with differing starting points. Radical nationalist historians and activists such as Teodoro Agoncillo, Jose Maria Sison, and Renato Constantino have pointed to the "revolution from below" of Andres Bonifacio. On the other hand, conservative nationalist politicians traced

8 Laurel's father served in the revolutionary army of Aguinaldo and was a signatory to the 1898 Malolos Constitution. He hailed from the province of Batangas, where some of the bloodiest skirmishes between American troops and Filipino revolutionaries had occurred, followed by a harsh pacification campaign. Although he joined the Nacionalista Party and agreed to play the colonial political game, he was quite critical of American colonialism in the Philippines. See Abinales and Amoroso 2005: 160.

9 For a detailed account of the issue of Filipino elite collaboration with the Japanese invaders, see de Viana 2003: 35–110.

the "unfinished revolution" to Aguinaldo's First Republic. Marcos, for example, connected his so-called "democratic revolution" (the imposition of authoritarian rule) to Aguinaldo's short-lived republic (Ileto 1993).

Duterte's Nationalist Revival

National politics in the post-Marcos Philippines have largely been a battle between two enduring narratives – reformism vs. populism. The post-Marcos Philippine "reformist" regime is based on a discourse of democracy and "good governance" characteristic of Cory Aquino's presidency and most of her successors. If a dominant regime "script" is seen to be challenged or, worse, abandoned by a president, the result is can be a severe legitimacy crisis. The "apostasy" of the Arroyo presidency can be understood in terms of such illegitimacy. Arroyo (who ascended the presidency trough the ouster of a "populist" incumbent) abandoned the reformist "narrative" (which had catapulted her to power) in her fight for political survival against another "populist" challenge (in which she manipulated the results of the 2004 election). Consequently, she suffered from a legitimacy crisis that nearly led to her being overthrown extra-constitutionally through civil protests and/or coup attempts. According to Mark Thompson (2010b: 163),

> The post-Marcos rise of the populist and reformist campaign narratives means that voters can no longer be simply divided into incumbent "ins" and opposition "outs." Instead, they must also be seen as tending to fall into either a camp that stresses paternalistic promises to end corruption or one that favors (elite resistance notwithstanding) policies meant to help the poor.[10]

The rise of Duterte repudiates the reformist-versus-populist dichotomy that characterised post-Marcos politics by reviving the nationalist narrative prominent during the post-war Third Philippine Republic. This narrative has been popularised in the writings of prominent intellectuals, mostly members of the Filipino elite, such as senators Claro M. Recto, Lorenzo Tañada, and Jose Diokno, industrialist Salvador Araneta, Harvard-trained lawyer-economist Alejandro Lichauco, economist Dr Emmanuel Yap and historians Teodoro Agoncillo and Renato Constantino. Nationalist fervour percolated during the 1950s as anti-establishment intellectuals began to question the colonial interpretation of Filipino

10 Thompson adds that the reformist-versus-populist split in the Philippines can be compared to the yellowshirt-versus-redshirt cleavage that divides Thailand.

history with the dissemination of alternative histories and biographies. With the defeat of the Huk rebellion and the outlawing of the old Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP, Communist Party of the Philippines), a number of former PKP members or Huk sympathisers emerged who continued their nationalist struggle in the classrooms as teachers (especially at the University of the Philippines and the Lyceum of Manila) or in the pages of newspapers and magazines (such as the Manila Times and Philippines Free Press) as journalists. Politicians and civil libertarians also questioned the continued American military and economic presence in the country. Carlos Garcia, Claro M. Recto, and Jose P. Laurel of the NP launched their "Filipino First" campaign. Later, even the NP's arch rival – the Liberal Party (LP) – would expropriate the narrative of the "unfinished revolution" under President Diosdado Macapagal (Ileto 1993).

However, the benign and almost conservative brand of the PKP and NP gave way to a more radical version fuelled by the new Left led by Jose Maria Sison. Writing as Amado Guerrero, the founding chairman of the re-established Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), Sison's reclamation of the "unfinished revolution" served as one of the symbolic foundations of the Maoist student radicals who fashioned themselves as heirs to the revolutionaries of 1896. He described the Philippines as a semi-colony of the US. Despite having granted formal independence to the Philippines, he claimed, the US continues to violate the national sovereignty of the Filipino people (Claudio 2013).

For Amando Doronila,

> the postwar explosion of nationalism was a continuation of the Filipinos historical struggle for independence – a continuity resonant in the emotive rhetoric of post-independence Filipino leaders, such as the call for completing the "unfinished revolution." (Doronila 1986: 39)

Essentially, the nationalist revival was a reaction to the humiliating presence of two large US military bases and the unequal economic treatises imposed on the Philippines after regaining its independence in 1946. Unfortunately, Filipino nationalism was isolated from the more radical Pan-Asian nationalism and was treated as a pariah due to its dominating neocolonial relationship with the US.

It was against this backdrop that the young Rodrigo Duterte became embroiled with the nationalist rhetoric of the Left. Duterte was taking his undergraduate degree in political science at the Lyceum in the late 1960s when he became a student of the young professorial lecturer Jose Maria Sison. Sison said:

> I am proud to say that President Duterte was my student in political science at the Lyceum of the Philippines when I was still a young professorial lecturer. He became a member of the *Kabataang Makabayan* [Nationalist Youth] of which I was the national chairman. (Macas 2016)

Sison added, "[we] are both inspired by the principles and objectives of *Kabataang Makabayan* and driven by the patriotic desire to continue the unfinished revolution of Andres Bonifacio" (Sabillo 2016). Based on these personal and ideological relations, the CPP had a long history of cooperation with the Davao mayor. This personal bond and the president's rising anti-American rhetoric has made it easier for the Philippine government to restart the peace process with the Communists (Chanco 2016).

Janus-faced Nationalism

Filipino nationalism is "constructed upon a history of opposition to a colonial and alien 'other'" (Ileto 1993: 78). By reviving the anti-US nationalism of his youth, Duterte is repudiating the liberal reformist, albeit elitist, narrative of the Aquino-to-Aquino regime. As the first president to be elected from Mindanao, he is not only channelling resentment against "imperial Manila" but also reckoning the historical blowback of "US imperialism", which has been most felt in in recent years due to the "War on Terror." While nationalism may be fuelling Duterte's foreign policy stance vis-à-vis the United States, his economic position remains within the neoliberal orthodoxy and is unlikely to impose economic protectionism (unlike in the US under a potential Donald Trump presidency).[11]

A "new" nationalism can be observed in the Asian region. Strong leaders have emerged, cloaking their regime with nationalist discourse. In Japan, Shinzo Abe was returned as prime minister by the Liberal Democratic Party with the promise of reforming the economy but ended up transforming the Japanese peaceful security policy and norm, amidst the rise of China. In China, Xi Jinping the Chinese Communist Party princeling offered his slogan of "realising the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." Other Asian leaders, such as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey and Narendra Modi of India, have made similar nationalist posturing.

11 Duterte is most likely to pursue a developmental state/state capitalist approach with emphasis on agrarian reform and nationalist industrialisation.

Rodrigo Duterte joins this growing list of nationalist strongmen in the region.

In the end, nationalism can be Janus-faced, it can unite internally and divide externally (Nairn 1997). The resurgence of nationalism, not only in Asia, but even in Europe, is an indication of the adverse reaction to globalisation, as the losers in the borderless world attempt to win back control of their respective national borders. For the Philippines, as historian Vicente Rafael explains,

> Nationalism is inherently conflictual, caught between dynastic/colonial modes of apprehension on the one hand and the possibilities of an egalitarian, postcolonial existence on the other; but that the means for imagining nationhood may at times be at odds with the very nature of the images that are reproduced. (Rafael 1990: 593)

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